

U.S. fears KGB roamed embassy

By Michael Wines
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WASHINGTON — Investigators now suspect that two Marine guards gave the Soviet KGB physical access to top-secret communications and CIA offices in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow in 1985 and 1986, government sources said yesterday.

"It's horrible," one knowledgeable official said. "We were had seven ways from Sunday." A second official said U.S. estimates of damage remain incomplete but conceded: "It's grim."

If the fears prove true, one source said, the damage could exceed even that wreaked by CIA turncoat Edward Lee Howard, who defected to the Soviet Union in 1985 after compromising key U.S. intelligence operations and sources in that nation.

U.S. investigators suspect that the two Marines, Cpl. Arnold Bracy and Sgt. Clayton J. Lonetree, arranged to serve security watches at the embassy together so they could allow Soviet agents to enter undetected.

The embassy normally is patrolled by no fewer than two guards at a time. This "buddy system" ensured that no single guard could grant unauthorized access to the building but did not preclude access being granted by two guards working in tandem.

The Marines say Bracy's and Lonetree's tours at the Moscow embassy overlapped for nearly eight months, during which they served on a number of watches together. During some of those watches, U.S. officials increasingly fear, KGB agents penetrated the most sensitive offices on

the uppermost floors of the embassy.

Those offices include seventh-, eighth- and ninth-floor complexes that house the embassy's coded communications center, the headquarters of the CIA's Moscow station chief and offices of the U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union.

Such access probably would mean that almost every embassy secret fell into Soviet hands, one intelligence official said. One official said it appeared certain that the communications center was compromised but that it was less clear whether CIA embassy offices were entered.

Bracy was placed in a Marine brig in Quantico, Va., Tuesday on suspicion of espionage-related crimes but has not been charged. A military magistrate is to decide after a hearing today whether he should continue to be confined.

Lonetree was jailed by the Marines last December, reportedly after confessing some role in Soviet espionage, and later was charged with 19 espionage-related crimes. Yesterday, the Marines added five more counts, including a second charge of espionage that could draw the death penalty under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The new charges include two counts of conspiracy to commit espionage, which one official said stemmed from the newly obtained evidence of Bracy's involvement in the case. The other two charges involve lesser criminal offenses.

Prosecutors and defense attorneys in the Lonetree case returned this week from Moscow and Vienna, where Lonetree was also stationed, after questioning U.S. officials in the two cities.

Lonetree's lawyers, citing Bracy's detention and the conspiracy allegations, have since asked to postpone an Article 32 hearing — the military equivalent of a grand jury proceeding — that has been convened in their client's case.

Lonetree's family has vehemently denied that he ever worked for the Soviets. Yesterday, Bracy's parents said their son also has denied any role in espionage, though he freely acknowledged a friendship with a female Soviet worker at the U.S. Embassy.

Bracy, 21, and Lonetree, 25, are said by U.S. officials to have been lured

into aiding the Soviets after being seduced by female embassy employees who were undercover KGB agents. Until a change in policy last fall, Soviet citizens were routinely employed at the Moscow embassy.

U.S. investigators are working from a "worst-case" scenario which assumes that the KGB had free and wide access to secure embassy areas. While that worst case was not "nailed down," one official said, investigators had strong suspicions that most of the embassy was compromised.

Another official said the KGB "physically got into the room — and worse."

One especially worrisome possibility is that KGB agents planted listening devices in the embassy that operated undetected after Lonetree was transferred to Vienna early last year. The KGB bugged some U.S. Embassy typewriters with surprisingly sophisticated devices at least twice in recent years.

They might still be working, one official said, had not another agency discovered similar devices in another U.S. facility and triggered a general search for the bugs.